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NECROLOGY.

ELLISON CAPERS, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of South Carolina, and a member of the South Carolina Historical Society, died at his home 910 Barnwell Street, Columbia, Wednesday, April 22, 1908, at 3 o'clock P. M.

He was born in Charleston October 14, 1837, and was the fourth son of Rev. William Capers (sometime bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South) and Susan McGill, his wife.¹ He received his early schooling in Charleston and at the Cokesbury Conference School and then entered the South Carolina Military Academy, from which he was graduated in 1857. He was an assistant instructor at the Citadel in 1858 and in 1859 taught in the Mount Zion Institute at Winnsboro and in November, 1859, was elected assistant professor, with the rank of second lieutenant, at the Citadel. At the time of the secession of South Carolina he was major of the 1st Regiment of Rifles, South Carolina militia, and was almost immediately called into the active service of the State. During the bombardment of Fort Sumter he commanded the light batteries on Sullivan's Island during the bombardment of Fort Sumter. On the resignation of Col. Pettigrew, Major Capers was promoted to lieutenant-colonel of the regiment, but resigned that position in 1861 and joined Col. C. H. Stevens in raising the 24th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, of which he was appointed lieutenant-colonel.

That regiment was mustered into Confederate service in April, 1862, and ordered to Secessionville for duty. During the remainder of that year he served with his regiment on Cole's Island, James Island, along the Ashepoo and the Combahee rivers and at Pocotaligo and near Wilmington, N. C. On June 23, 1862, he commanded four companies of

¹See Vol. II of this *Magazine*.

the 24th Regiment and the Charleston Battalion in the first fight on James Island, leading a charge against the 100th Pennsylvania Regiment, posted in and behind a row of negro cabins at Legaré's, and routing the enemy.

At Secessionville he was detached to direct the firing of a flank battery of two twenty-four-pounder guns, and received the thanks of Brigadier-Generals Evans and Smith for the services he rendered.

In May, 1863, the 25th, with Gist's entire brigade, was ordered to the relief of Vicksburg. Arriving at Jackson, Miss., on the 13th, with the advance of the brigade under command of Col. Peyton Colquitt, of Georgia, the enemy were reported marching on the town. Gen. Johnston arrived to take command by the same train, and ordered Col. Colquitt to march out on the Clinton road at daylight and hold McPherson's corps in check, while the city of Jackson was being evacuated.

In the fight which ensued next morning, the 14th, from sunrise to 12 M., Col. Capers commanded the left of the brigade, Col. Stevens having been detained in Charleston a few days, and just as the order came from Gen. Johnston to retire the brigade after the gallant stand it had made Col. Capers received a severe wound in his right leg, his horse also being shot.

After an absence of six weeks he rejoined his regiment at Morton, Miss., and remained with it until another wound received in the thigh at Chickamauga, Ga., obliged him to retire from the field. The 24th was riddled in this great fight. Col. Stevens, Col. Capers and Major Jones and Lieut. J. Clarence Palmer, the adjutant of the regiment, were all badly shot, the latter being killed by Col. Capers's side. The flag of the 24th was five times shot down, and as often carried forward by brave hands.

Rejoining his regiment in winter quarters at Dalton, Ga., in December, 1863, and the gallant colonel of the 24th being promoted a brigadier-general and assigned to the command of Wilson's Georgia brigade, Lieut-Col. Capers was promoted colonel.

In the campaigns of Generals Johnston and Hood in

Northern Georgia and in Tennessee Col. Capers was at the head of his regiment, and commanded the brigade during the siege of Atlanta and at the battle of Jonesboro, Gen. Gist being absent wounded.

In Gen. Johnston's campaign he received the thanks of the corps commander in orders for an attack on the enemy at Calhoun, and again at Jonesboro the commanding general complimented him and the brigade for the gallant stand they made on the extreme right of the Confederate line against the assaults of Gen. Jeff Davis's division of Sherman's army.

At the battle of Franklin, in Tennessee, November 30, 1864, Gen. Gist was killed and Col. Capers severely wounded. Gist's brigade was attached to Cheatham's division of Hardee's corps, and in the Tennessee campaign, Cheatham commanding the corps, Major-General J. C. Brown commanded the division. The brigadiers were Strahl, Carter, Vaughn and Gist. Brown and Vaughn were wounded and Gist, Strahl and Carter killed on the field. When Col. Capers was shot down Major B. Burgh Smith, the gallant Adjutant-General of the brigade, was the senior officer left in the brigade, and he being soon after wounded while directing the fight at the last work of the enemy the brigade was actually left in command of a captain. The wound of Col. Capers was a serious one and laid him up for months.

He was appointed brigadier-general March 2, 1865, to take rank from March 1, 1865; was confirmed by the Senate March 2, 1865, and was assigned to Gen. Johnston's army in North Carolina, to command his old brigade, his regiment and the 16th South Carolina Volunteers being consolidated, and Major B. B. Smith, promoted from the staff for gallant conduct, to be colonel, was assigned to the command. Johnson's army surrendered at Greensboro on April 26th following, but no record of Gen. Capers's capture or parole has been found.

Following the close of the war a brilliant career in public life apparently lay open to Gen. Capers had he chosen to embrace it. He was elected Secretary of State in December, 1866, notwithstanding the fact that it was known that

he was a candidate for the ministry. Before his term of office expired he was ordained a priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church in May, 1867, and, having accepted a call to become rector of Christ Church, at Greenville, he tendered his resignation. Governor Orr declined to receive it until the General Assembly should meet, but in the meanwhile the Reconstruction era began, and in July, 1868, he turned over the office to F. L. Cardoza.

He then became rector of the church at Greenville, remaining there for twenty years. An effort was made in 1882 to induce him to again enter public life, the State Democratic Convention, which met in October of that year, placing his name without his knowledge or consent upon the State ticket as the Democratic candidate for Superintendent of Education. He, however, declined most positively to run, and insisted that his name be withdrawn from the ticket.

The work of Bishop Capers as a minister was characterized by great success, not only at Greenville, but at Selma, Alabama, where he was located for one year, and at Trinity Church, Columbia, where he labored for six years. The degree of D. D. was conferred upon him by South Carolina College in 1892, and in 1893 he was unanimously chosen Bishop Coadjutor of the diocese of South Carolina. After he assumed charge of the work it prospered wonderfully, the number of communicants being almost doubled. Upon the death of Bishop Howe he became Bishop.

Two years ago Bishop Capers recommended to the diocese the election of a Bishop Coadjutor, the recommendation being made because of his consciousness of his failing health and in pursuance of the urgent requests of his friends to lighten his labors. At the Diocesan Convention of 1907 the election was had, and the Rev. Dr. W. A. Guerry, then of the University of the South at Sewanee, but a native of South Carolina, was elected Bishop Coadjutor.

He was married in 1859 to Miss Charlotte Rebecca Palmer, of St. John's, Berkeley.